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THE VALLEY OF UNREST

A Book Without a Woman

EDGAR ALLAN POE

An Old Oddity Paper, Edited by

Douglass Sherley

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A BOOK WITHOUT A WOMAN

DEDICATED TO A WOMAN

THIS book does not begin with an apology for its appearance. I, the editor, have none to offer. But it begins inſtead with what I am ſure will be an unſatiſfactory ſtatement. I have neither the right nor the inclination to make public the knowledge which, by a mere accident, I chance to poſſeſs, concerning the author of the following pages.

This much I feel at liberty to ſtate: He was well born, well reared, eccentric. He paſſed through life bearing the burden of ſome particular grievance of which the world did not know. His education was of his own curious making. His writings, a trifle weird, bear more plainly the marks of a peculiar originality than they do of erudition.

He was the only ſon, the hope and the pride of a proud man full of bitterneſs and world-hate. Between this father and child there was but little love, and abſolutely no ſympathy. A roving ſpirit early developed, and a fondneſs for ſtudying human nature *direct*, rather than through the oftentimes more tedious medium of books, ſoon diſſipated the hope, and ſoon broke

broke the pride of this over-ambitious and too exacting father. Young, erratic, with only the uncertain memory of a good mother, long dead, to keep him pure—without guile—he drifted beyond the line that ſharply defines the difference between the right and the wrong.

Then there came a time when he was allowed to gratify the one paſſionate deſire of his early youth—travel, travel, conſtant, world-wide travel. Thoſe many years of reſtleſs wandering gained for him a unique and rich experience. Fortunate, indeed, were thoſe who liſtened to his talk. He was a fanciful, magnetic man, full of ſtrange conceits. He was a tragedy. His life was a rugged, tragic poem.

One act of his full-primed manhood—rare, brilliant—brought him the applauſe of an hour. Yet it was an act ſo rare, ſo brilliant, that it deſerved better things. If I could mention his name, there are thoſe now living who would recall to mind the matter and the man. Later on in life, embittered, ſcorned by thoſe who by nature and by right ought to have been every thing to him, he committed an

an awful crime. Each detail thereof was coldly, calculatingly planned. And each detail was even more coldly, more calculatingly executed. But it was a crime with the criminal unknown. That guilty one, now dead, ſpeaks to thoſe who may liſten from the printed pages of this book. But theſe pages tell the tale of other people's lives, and not of his own. They tell ſomething of that ſtrange man, Edgar Allan Poe, who was an intimate college friend. They tell ſomething that may chance to lend a freſh intereſt and a new charm to the always intereſting and to the always charming ſtudy of—to quote from the following pages—That myſterious human fantaſy.

The Editor.

Autumn, 1883.

WHATEVER an idle fancy may chance to term this **Valley of Unrest**, it is woven, as may be ſeen, in and around about a poem, a mere fragment, ſeldom read, written by EDGAR ALLAN POE.

The Valley of Unrest is the name of the poem, and **The Valley of Unrest** is the name of the book.

It is a book without a woman. She does not find her ſubtle accuſtomed place in this valley of unreſt. She ſeems to be abſent in both the body and the ſpirit. It is an Eden without an Eve: but it is not a paradiſe without a ſerpent.

Harmony long ago fled the bounds of this ſtrange unhappy valley, but ſhe was not driven forth by woman.

Diſcord in greedy haſte found a foothold in the dell, once a land of ſweet and quiet reſt. But diſcord was not brought thereto by woman's call or by woman's art.

Now, let the Valley of Unreſt and the dwellers therein ſpeak for themſelves.

DOUGLASS SHERLEY.

Midſummer, 1883.

The Poem—

ONCE it ſmiled a ſilent dell
Where the people did not dwell;
They had gone unto the wars,
Truſting to the mild-eyed ſtars,
Nightly, from their azure towers,
To keep watch above the flowers,
In the midſt of which all day
The red ſunlight lazily lay.
Now each viſitor ſhall confeſs
The ſad valley's reſtleſſneſs.
Nothing there is motionleſs—
Nothing ſave the airs that brood
Over the magic ſolitude.
Ah, by no wind are ſtirred thoſe trees
That palpitate like the chill ſeas
Around the miſty Hebrides!
Ah, by no wind thoſe clouds are driven
That ruſtle through the unquiet Heaven
Uneaſily, from morn till even,
Over the violets there that lie
In myriad types of the human eye—
Over the lilies there that wave
And weep above a nameleſs grave!
They wave:—from out their fragrant tops
Eternal dews come down in drops.
They weep:—from off their delicate ſtems
Perennial tears deſcend in gems.

THERE are moments in the lives of all men when the fragrance of ſome one flower, or the brief ſnatch of ſome favorite love-ſong, or the ſound of ſome familiar voice, will inſtantly charm the mind with a ſtrange and ſubtle witchery.

Myſterious moments, that bring back again the baniſhed or forgotten things. Peculiar aſſociation of ideas that reproduce the once vivid pictures which have vaniſhed from the canvas of life.

So it was to-night.

Here, in my den of old oddities, nothing pleaſed me. I put aſide the yellow ſheets of a German manuſcript, a curious maſs of erudition. It had failed to furniſh a ſolace to my lonely hour. I was poſſeſſed by a ſpirit of reſtleſſneſs. I paſſed over to the ſquare hole under the deep ſlanting eaves that anſwers the purpoſe of a window. I thruſt back the darkened unpainted ſhutter. It creaked diſmally on its one ruſty hinge. I looked out into the blackneſs of the night. A ſnow ſtorm was raging.

I could feel the ſoft white flakes falling againſt

againſt my withered face. And I thought of the ſnow ſtorm of life that was beating in upon my full wintered years.

From below, far down the turn of the road, there came a ſound of many voices, and the muſical ring of jingling ſleigh-bells, and then all was ſilent.

That was hours ago, early in the night. Yet the ſound of thoſe merry unknown voices, and the jingle of thoſe muſical bells have ſomehow, by the charm of that ſtrange ſubtle witchery, brought back from out of the paſt a myſterious human fantaſy, which in thoſe other and far-off years gave a coloring to my life that has not faded out, and never will.

A GLANCE, a hand-claſp, and a word. Three potent factors that won my home-ſick heart, on the afternoon of my firſt day at the Virginia Univerſity. Edgar Allan Poe was the winner thereof. I had ſtood aloof, a lonely ſixteen-year-old boy, on the outer edge of an unſympathetic crowd. His eye met mine. He

He came forward, offered me his hand, and ſaid, "I like you. I want to know you." From that moment dated our friendſhip. From that day I was recognized as the moſt intimate friend of Poe while he remained at the Univerſity.

Now, in truth, he was indeed a myſterious human fantaſy.

To-day, even after all theſe years of diligent inveſtigation, there is ſo little actually known of the inner life of this ſtrange man.

Several periods bear ſo heavy a miſt of uncertainty and falſe report that we are forced to content ourſelves with the bareſt outline.

Somewhere there is told a legend of a man, who did for ſake of gold ſell his ſhadow. But this, our human fantaſy, muſt have parted with his ſubſtance, and paſſed through life only a ſhadow in dalliance with an immortal ſoul.

In that part fanciful, part biographical ſketch of his own life, "William Wilſon," thus does he ſpeak of thoſe years ſpent in the Manor-Houſe School at Stoke Newington, England: "My earlieſt recollections of a ſchool are connected

nected with a large, rambling Elizabethan house in a misty looking village of England, where were a vast number of gigantic and knarled trees, and where all the houses were excessively ancient.

"In truth it was a dream-like and spirit-soothing place, that venerable old town.

"At this moment, in fancy, I feel the refreshing chilliness of its deeply shadowed avenues, inhale the fragrance of its thousand shrubberies, and thrill anew with indefinable delight at the deep hollow note of the church bell, breaking each hour with sudden and sullen roar upon the stillness of the dusky atmosphere in which the fretted Gothic steeple lay embedded and asleep."

Many a time, while we walked arm and arm beneath those now crumbling arcades at the Virginia University, Poe has talked by the hour of that old Manor-House School, long before he had even thought of formulating William Wilson. He would often thrill my boyish fancy with his world of romance and dreams without wakenings. The other day, a lengthening

street

ſtreet of the Engliſh metropolis ſtretched itſelf over the leveled ruins of that ancient Manor Houſe.

His life at the Univerſity has always been buried deep in a maſs of obſcurity. Much has been written about him, but little has been written and leſs is known about his Univerſity career.

With this one period of his life I am familiar, for he was then my only friend, and I knew him well.

NOW in thoſe days a ſpirit of diſſipation prevailed among the ſtudents of the Univerſity. While men like unto Geſſner Harriſon, Henry Tutwiler, and Phil. Cocke abſtained from the midnight revel and ſtrictly obeyed each obligation placed upon them by the faculty, we, a gay rollicking ſet, with Poe for our leader, were much given to a non-attendance at the daily lecture, and to a freedom from all regulations and reſtraints impoſed by thoſe high in authority.

thority. Yet ſomehow we managed to ſpend a large portion of our time in the Univerſity library; ſeated ſide by ſide, in one of thoſe curious and now muſty alcoves, we read the hiſtories of Lingard and Hume.

Poe was paſſionately fond of French literature. Often have I made pauſe in my own reading and liſtened to his muſically whiſpered tranſlation from ſome old French play, until Wertenbaker, the ancient librarian appointed by Jefferſon, and who died only a little while ago, would place a warning finger on his cloſed lips. Of late years I have often made ſearch for thoſe particular paſſages in the old French dramas; but I have not found them. And now this is my thought: he would more frequently weave the alleged tranſlation from his own imaginative brain than from the printed page; for he knew that my knowledge of French was limited, and that I would not be able to diſcover the charming fraud. The French drama is an old and pleaſant ſtory to me now. But it has never yielded the pleaſure found in that library alcove, liſtening to

thoſe

thoſe fraudulent tranſlations, dreading the approach of Wertenbaker bidding us to be ſilent or leave the library.

We were familiar with the whole field of Engliſh poetry from Chaucer to Scott. There was not a paſſage of ſingular beauty in either that Poe could not inſtantly recall. And ſo it was with intermediate writers. He declared Shakeſpere to be a magnificent whirlpool, into which he conſtantly deſired to fling away the beſt that was in him. Once he ſaid to me, "Shakeſpere faſcinates me with an evil faſcination. He ſtirs up within me the demon-ſide of my nature. I have for him a paſſionate love-hate."

Halcyon indeed were thoſe days of my youth, when Poe was my friend, aye, the other half of my ſoul. Ah, there is a grim philoſophy in the old ſaying, that we are never young but once!

Thoſe weird tales and muſical poems of the after years are but the crystallization of his thoughts and his fancies which so often found an echo in my heart, or that made echo up

and

and down **The Valley of Unrest** that lies buried deep in the Ragged Mountains of Virginia.

My Lord Beaconfield's portraiture of his remarkable father, Iſaac Diſraeli, bears a ſtrong likeneſs to young Poe, "indicating by the whole carriage of his life that he was of a different order from thoſe among whom he lived; timid, ſuſceptible, loſt in revery, fond of ſolitude, or ſeeking no better company than a book, the years had ſtolen on till he had arrived at that mournful period of boyhood *when eccentricities excite attention and command no ſympathy.*"

Poe, unlike Iſaac Diſraeli, could at times completely yield himſelf to the gay companionſhip of reckleſs young fellows. But down in his heart he cared nothing for that wild diſſipation that ſo often characterized his actions. It was but an outer maſk to hide his inner ſelf; it was but an effort, an unſucceſſful effort, to make himſelf like unto others. Eccentricity is often a curſe, and always a crime—a crime perpetrated againſt the ignorance of willfully common-place people; people who live according

ing

ing to rule; people who erect a ſtandard, and who would have all live up, or rather down to it, and woe unto the man who departs therefrom.

Edgar Allan Poe, when firſt I knew him, was ſeventeen years of age, rather ſhort of ſtature, thick, and ſomewhat compactly ſet. He was ſtrong of arm and ſwift of foot—for he was an expert in athletic and gymnaſtic arts. A more beautiful face on man or woman I have never ſeen. It was the beauty of the ſoul, always near the ſurface, always in a glow of ſtrange, unearthly paſſion. His walk was rapid, and his movement quick and nervous. He had about him the air of a native-born Frenchman, and a mercurial diſpoſition deliciouſly unſtable. He was fond of cards. Seven-up and loo were his favorite games. He played like a mad-man. He drank like a mad-man. He did both under a ſudden impulſe. Something always ſeemed to drive him on. Unſeen forces played havoc with his reaſon. He would ſeize the glaſs that he actually loathed, yet always ſeemed to love, and without the leaſt apparent pleaſure ſwallow the contents, quickly draining the laſt drop.

drop. One glaſs, and his whole nervous nature ran riot within its highly tortured ſelf. Then followed a flow of wild talk which enchained each fortunate liſtener with a ſyren-like power.

It is curious to follow the ſubſequent lives of thoſe men who were his conſtant companions around the card-table, and who filled, from out of the ſame punch-bowl, their never-empty glaſſes with the ſame *peach and honey*.

Peach and honey, that drink once ſo popular, long years ago, with the Virginia and Carolina gentlemen of the old ſchool.

There was Thomas S. Gholſon, and of all the ſet there was not one more reckleſs. He was afterward a pious judge of ſome diſtinction and of great integrity.

Upton Beale, who always held the winning card, became an Epiſcopal miniſter. He was ſtationed for years, in fact until his death, at Norfolk, Virginia, and he was beloved by the people of his pariſh.

Philip Slaughter, Poe's moſt intimate *card-friend*, is ſtill living. He, too, a miniſter of the goſpel. I am told that he is an excellent God-

God-fearing man. I wonder if he remembers thoſe wayward days of his youth, when he and Poe were partners at cards, and held between them a common treaſury?

I have loſt ſight of Nat. Dunn and Wm. A. Creighton. In all likelihood they have gone unto that other land.

Billie Burwell, a rare genius of that old ſet, has ſuffered many changes of fortune. He is neither judge nor miniſter; unlike the reſt, he has never been able to finiſh ſowing his wild oats. When laſt I heard of him he was living in New Orleans. He was ſtill aſſiduouſly cul-

tivating the refined ſociety of kings and queens, and he was ſtill a large dealer in diamonds and clubs. And there was yet another one, Thos. Goode Tucker, of North Carolina. He was a great-hearted fellow. He was handſome, bold, and reckleſs. He was a warm friend and a bitter enemy, and he was paſſionately devoted to young Poe. This ſame Tucker was a great fox hunter. Poe and he were the conſtant terror of that Piedmont country. Whenever the farmers of Albemarle found their fences down,

down, their fields of ſmall grain trampled and all but ruined, they would roundly ſwear thoſe infernal young raſcals—Poe and Tucker—were the guilty ones, out on the chaſe again. And thoſe farmers were right.

Tucker is now, like unto myſelf, an old man; yet he wrote me the other day, "Come, and with me, for the ſake of thoſe old times, let us follow the hounds once more."

A ſtrong, linked intimacy exiſted between Tucker and Poe. Tucker was not only intimate with the diſſipated ſide of his nature, but with that other and better ſide known to only a few, principally women. It was a ſide which good and pure women were ſo ſure to find out, appreciate, and defend, when others were ſo ready to blame. Whatever Poe may have been in after years, he was, when I knew him at the Univerſity of Virginia, as honeſt a friend as the ſometimes waywardneſs of his otherwiſe noble nature would allow. There was then not the leaſt touch of inſincerity, and never the ſlighteſt indication of that maliciouſly fickle diſpoſition which in after times was ſo often

often brought up againſt him in life, and againſt his memory in death.

Marked peculiarities do not elicit ſympathy from the common run of people—the great majority. They place the unhappy poſſeſſor in a moſt undeſirable poſition. Miſunderſtandings conſtantly ariſe, and they can not often be explained, even if explanation be ſought. Therefore it is not a matter of much ſurpriſe that Edgar Poe did not have many intimate friends. For he was indeed, even when I knew him—a mere boy—a man of ſtrongly marked peculiarities. Theſe peculiarities conſtantly led him into trouble. He made enemies out of thoſe who ſhould have been his friends. And of this he was more oftentimes unaware. For his enemies at the Univerſity were of that moſt dangerous, moſt contemptible order—*ſecret enemies*—fellows ready to give the ſtab from behind, and under cover of darkneſs. A band of envious cowards outſkirt the ways of all ſuch men as Poe. And always muſt eccentric greatneſs pay a penalty; nay, not one, but numberleſs ones to the clamoring, commonplace fool and the ſilent, envious knave.

Yet

Yet Poe was a power when he cared to try his ſtrength. He was full of adaptability. He could play cards and drink *peach and honey* hour after hour, and day in and day out, with thoſe who merely chanced to be thrown in his way. But a genuine friendſhip aſks for ſomething more and better than ordinary conviviality and a ſhuffling, each in turn, the ſame pack of cards. Other ties than thoſe muſt be found to bring two ſouls together in a life-long attachment.

There was a curious magnetic ſympathy exiſting not only between our hearts but even between our minds. In the ſilent watches of the night I have often cloſed the book before me, no matter how intereſting, riſen from my ſeat and, moving under the guidance of an irreſiſtible impulſe, gone out beneath the arcade, ſo full of ſtrange ſhadows, and ſtarted toward the room near by, occupied by Poe, and have met him in his own doorway, coming to me, actuated by the *ſame irreſiſtible impulſe*. Not once, twice, or thrice, but again and again has this happened. And often in thoſe ſilent watches

watches of the night did he read to me the early productions of his youth. They were not publiſhed—not one of them—becauſe unſpared by his critical hand. His ſenſitive nature oftentimes made him a ruthleſs deſtroyer of much that was good. He could not brook the idle, laughing cenſure of his comrades. On ſeveral occaſions I perſuaded him to give his own ſmall circle of intimate friends the rare privilege of liſtening to him read his own weird writings.

Thoſe men—now all dead but Tucker and myſelf—who were ſo fortunate as to hear thoſe impromptu readings could never forget them. In their old age their fireſide ſtories were all the better for that memory. From out of the paſt, clear and ſtrongly outlined, riſe thoſe readings. It is the memory of one eſpecial night. The hour is late—after twelve. On Weſt Range one midnight lamp is burning. It is in the room of Edgar Allan Poe—No. 13. Our ſmall circle is complete. By accident we have gathered there. It is a rare meeting, unmarred by the preſence of uncongenial ſouls. Each a kindred ſpirit, each in ſympathy with the

the other. There is a ſhort, impreſſive ſilence. Then, ſpell-bound, barely breathing, we liſten to a ſtory, weird and wonderfully ſtrange, which Poe has juſt written—the ink not yet dry on the laſt page.

He reads with his whole ſoul thrown into every action and into each muſical intonation of his well-toned voice. Now loud and rapid, like the mad ruſh of many waters; now low and ſlow, like the trickling of a ſtream in a hollow cavern. Then ſinking into a whiſpered ſentence of incantations and mad curſes; then into a ſoftly murmured, yet paſſionate vow of ſome ardent, hopeleſs lover, and—the ſtory is told, the reading over. Ah, it was indeed a privilege to be there!

Once he wrote and read to us a long ſtory full of quaint humor. Unlike the moſt of his ſtories, it was free from that uſual ſomber coloring and thoſe ſad concluſions merged in a miſt of impenetrable gloom that we ſo often find in his publiſhed writings. In a ſpirit of idle jeſt and not of adverſe criticiſm, ſome one of our number ſpoke lightly of the ſtory.

This

This produced within him a fit of nervous anger, and he flung every ſheet behind the blaze on his hearth. And thus was loſt a ſtory of excellent parts. "Gaffy," the name of his hero, furniſhed a name for the ſtory. He was often thereafter good humoredly called "Gaffy" Poe, which was a name that he did not like.

NOW, in thoſe early days of the Univerſity of Virginia, a pernicious practice prevailed among the ſtudents at large. It was gambling at cards and for money. This vice was then prevalent among the beſt of Southern people. But Thomas Jefferſon did not propoſe to tolerate its dangerous preſence in his well-planned inſtitution of learning. He found that it needed a ſpeedy and effectual check. This, the year before his death, he promptly attempted to give; and while he may not have been entirely ſucceſſful, yet, as one of the reſults of that effort, we were driven into **The Valley of Unrest** which lies hidden in the wooded heart of the Ragged Mountains.

Mr. Jefferſon,

Mr. Jefferſon, after much anxious deliberation with the Univerſity Board of Directors and others, decided upon a plan to eradicate the baleful habit of playing cards for ſake of gold and ſilver coin. He conſulted with the civil authorities. He found out the names of the moſt noted young gamblers, and he gave inſtructions that they ſhould be indicted in due form and brought before the next grand jury. So, one bright morning in early ſpring, the ſheriff, with a goodly poſſe, ſuddenly appeared within the doorway of our lecture-room during the Latin hour. The ſtaid old profeſſor was calling the roll. That ſervant of the law ſtood in readineſs to ſerve his writs on certain ones as the profeſſor ſhould mention the names of each guilty party. But gay young raſcals are not to be ſo eaſily enſnared within the toils of the eager enemy. We needed no word of warning. The ſhadow acroſs the doorway, and a gang of men behind, told its own ſtory. With Edgar Allan Poe for our leader, we ſcattered in every direction—ſome through the window, and ſome through an oppoſite door.

Sheriff,

Sheriff, poſſe, and profeſſor were left in full poſſeſſion of the lecture-room. Once on the outſide, under the guidance of Poe—our maſter ſpirit in all times of danger—we marſhaled our ſcattered forces. Then, the hot purſuit. But thoſe whom they wanted the moſt, the ringleaders—our own ſet—had made a ſucceſſful eſcape, not to our rooms, for there we would not have been ſafe, but off to the wild, Ragged Mountains, a jagged ſpur of the Blue Ridge, over an almoſt untrodden path.

But it was a hidden way well known to Poe, over which, always alone, he had often traveled. With ruling paſſion, ſtrong even in haſty flight, ſome of the party had managed to arm themſelves with a deck of cards and a goodly portion of *peach and honey*. This, in order that the hours of our ſelf-impoſed baniſhment might not hang heavy upon our idle hands.

OUR place of concealment was **The Valley of Unrest**. It was a beautiful dell, high up in the mountains, almoſt inacceſſible, and far away from

from the beaten path. It was the favorite haunt of Edgar Allan Poe. When almoſt overpowered by thoſe ſtrange ſpells of mental depreſſion, approaching near unto the border-land of inſanity, thither would he go, and alone. There for hours he would often linger, buried deep in the bitter-ſweets of melancholy; and there, environed by low-ſweeping pines, murmuring perpetual dirges, his active brain became ſtrongly imbued with thoſe wild, fanciful ideas which are ſo realiſtic even in their unreality; for, out of the dark-green, needle-pointed foliage of thoſe low-ſweeping pines there forever actually ſeemed to ooze a dreary ſomberneſs that permeated all the atmoſphere with a gloom which hung like an uncanny miſt over the beautiful dell.

It was a myſterious place. Something ſeemed to huſh our voices and to muffle each footfall. If the ſpirit of adventure had not within each one of us been driven up to fever heat by the excitement of the moment, there could have been no human power able to detain us in that place of myſtery. Surely it was this haunt of

his

his youth that Poe did in after years ſo cunningly picture in exquiſite verſe, and fittingly termed **The Valley of Unrest.**

It muſt indeed be true that Poe was filled with the memory of that lonely dell, which lies ſo deeply buried in the great wooded heart of the Ragged Mountains, when he wrote that beautiful poem. And in that lonely dell, for the better part of three days and nights, we did conceal ourſelves from the ſearch of the ſheriff and his poſſe in that long ago ſpringtime.

Each day it was our cuſtom to play cards and drink *peach and honey*. Each night we would light our torches, kindle a fire of pine fagots to diſpel the chill night airs of early ſpring, then each in turn tell his ſtory. After midnight we would go in ſingle file and in ſilence down the mountain ſide. On the outſkirts of the Univerſity we would find a little knot of anxious friends ready to ſupply us with proviſions and *peach and honey*.

Before the coming of the dawn we would find ourſelves back again within the ſhadows of that lonely dell, **The Valley of Unrest.**

Two lines that occur in the poem—

"Over the lilies there that wave
And weep above a *nameleſs grave*"—(*a*)

were uttered by Edgar Allan Poe while he told his ſtory on the laſt night of our baniſhment in the Ragged Mountains; and it was the laſt ſtory told on that night. Each time Poe's tale was the laſt; and while he talked we would forget to repleniſh the fire, forget every thing but the intricate plot which he might chance to unroll before us. When he finiſhed we would, ſhivering, riſe to our feet, and haſtily depart from the ſpot and paſs away from under its uncanny ſhadows, but not from the memory thereof. All of theſe years have not brought me a forgetfulneſs of thoſe ſpringtime nights and of that one laſt night.

On the afternoon of the third day the glad news came that we had been forgiven. Poe, our ringleader, was the only unhappy one of the party. He thought it ſo tame an ending to our flight, he was half unwilling to return again. That afternoon and night he was exceedingly gloomy and held aloof.

(*a*) See The Poem.

For

For the laſt time we lighted the torches and kindled the fire; for the laſt time we, each in turn, told our ſtories. Poe alone had not ſpoken. We had left him to himſelf. Thomas Goode Tucker had juſt finiſhed a tale of a ſweet and tender nature. The old ſtory of two lovers—a grievous miſunderſtanding, a cruel ſeparation, a happy reconciliation. It was a reſtful bit of human nature, a trifle commonplace, but ſo reſtfully, charmingly told as to gain a forgiveneſs for its evident touch of everyday life. During the little pauſe that follows the telling of any good ſtory, Poe, ſtill full of gloom, ſtrode in from out of the ſhadows and ſtood in our midſt with folded arms, and told *his* ſtory.

To-night the recollection of thoſe burning words, ſlow and diſtinctly uttered, riſe before me in all of their original freſhneſs and in all of their original horror. On the day after, I alone of that little party expreſſed a willingneſs to return ſome day to that ſpot in the Ragged Mountains where we had liſtened to that ſtrange ſtory, ſo wonderfully and ſtrangely told.

His

His firſt words, delivered in a ſlow, monotonous tone, were thoſe myſterious lines found in the poem—

"Over the lilies there that wave
And weep above a *nameleſs grave*."

He pauſed, then pointed to a little clump of early ſpring lilies. They were juſt coming into bloom. They were growing into beauty beneath the ſhadows of a large hemlock, on the inner edge of the firelight glow, plainly in the ſight of all. Somehow, inſtantaneouſly, came the thought to each one of us, how like a grave-mound thoſe cluſtered lilies had ſhaped themſelves as they grew.

"No; you are wrong," he ſaid, ſeeming to divine our very thought; "the ſhape of yonder bed of fair lilies is but a foreſhadowing of a grave yet to be there—a grave that ſhall be forever *nameleſs*. No one now lies beneath the purity of thoſe bloſſoms. Their fragrance and their lovelineſs are not ſtolen from any human mold ſlowly decaying beneath the dark, rich ſoil. Out in the blackneſs of the night, beyond the flare of your torch and the light of your fire,

fire, a company of ill-boding ſpirits have gathered. In their center three Demons of the Darkneſs. They are dancing. It is the Death-Dance. They ſtop. And now they are, each in turn, whiſpering to me. But you can neither hear nor ſee them. As they whiſper to me I will repeat the words to you."

Bending forward in the attitude of an eager liſtener, and as if ſtraining to catch the words of ſome one whiſpering, Poe ſlowly uttered the ſtrange ſentences of his wild ſtory. The deception—if deception it was—was indeed moſt perfect. Each one of our number was ready to believe that Poe was actually hearing and repeating words ſpoken to him by ſome inviſible perſon. The action was ſo wonderfully natural that it created the moſt abſorbing intereſt, and had upon us all the moſt ſtartling effect. For a brief while I could ſcarcely believe my own identity. It was, in truth, ſome time before I could rid myſelf of the impreſſion that Poe was in actual and direct communication with evil ſpirits. Tucker afterwards told me that ſeveral members of the party—

otherwiſe

otherwiſe ſenſible fellows—were never able entirely to rid themſelves of this impreſſion.

It is uſeleſs to even attempt a reproduction of that ſtory. The bare outline—at beſt feeble—is all that I dare truſt myſelf to give. Thoſe three Demons are ſuppoſed to be the narrators, uſing Poe as a mouthpiece. Conſequently the ſtory is divided into three parts.

I.

Two young men ſtart out in life together. They have been unto one another more like brothers than like friends. Their hearts are drawn together by the tendereſt ties that can bind two unſelfiſh ſouls. Manhood finds them living a peaceful, harmonious life. Thus far without the ſhadows. But a curſe yet unfulfilled hangs over them—ſome iniquity of the fathers that muſt be viſited on the children of the third and fourth generation.

Diſcord, and then the horrors of civil war invade the peaceful land. The execution of the curſe is near. There is a great iſſue at ſtake,

and

and thoſe young men differ about the merits of the cauſe. It is their firſt difference. They go on the battle-field and on oppoſite ſides. In an evil hour, in the bitterneſs of a hand-to-hand conflict, they meet, each unknown to the other. Their weapons croſs, a deadly thruſt, and one lies dying. Then the cruel agony of a too-late recognition. While the dying man breathes away his life, young, and ſo like a flower, on the boſom of his comrade, full of wretchedneſs, a voice:—"Your ſoul has expiated the curſe of your race; peace abide with you." He is dead. But other voices, harſh and penetrating, ring out upon the ear of the griefſtricken ſurvivor, "Your curſe has barely begun its baleful courſe; you are to go about the world a homeleſs, friendleſs wanderer; and when the end does come, you are to lie in a grave forever *nameleſs*."

II.

A ſtorm. Night falls about, drawn on before its time. Out of the darkneſs of a diſtant valley a

ley a man full of years toils up the mountain ſide. But a human ſhadow. He trembles with fatigue and fright. The ſtorm ſweeps along the mountain. He ſeeks protection from its raging, unpent fury beneath the branches of a wide-ſpreading hemlock. It is where you are ſeated to-night. Years hence will mark his coming to this lonely dell in the heart of the Ragged Mountains. The ſhadows will ſteal away his power of action, and the ſhadows will cloſe in and around about him, and from this ſpot he will not again depart.

III.

This human ſhadow, ſhut in by a troop of Demon-ſent ſhadows, labors day by day at ſome myſterious taſk. Never man worked at ſo ſtrange a labor. It is the ſlow making of a grave—*and his own*. Day after day the work goes on. Then there comes a pauſe. His labors are ended. And there, at the foot of a beautiful bed of lilies, an open grave. And now

now he ſleeps in that grave, made by the painful toil of his own weak and ſhriveled hands.

Said Edgar Allan Poe, in concluſion, "The fitfulneſs of his life goes out into a perpetual darkneſs. The Angel of Death forever calms the troubled heart. And in thoſe days when my three now powerful Demons ſhall have loſt their high and moſt evil eſtate, and when other and better ſpirits ſhall have gathered here to hold high carnival in their ſtead, then the ſong of the midnight elfin ſhall be—

'Over the lilies there that wave
And weep above a *nameleſs grave*.'"

HIS ſtory was ended. Thoſe laſt words were ſaid in a whiſper. Then there was a long and painful ſilence. Not a word, not a movement, only the crackling ſound of pine fagots almoſt burned out. We made effort to ſhake off the gloom ſettling down upon us. It was uſeleſs. Then we were ſtartled to our feet by the ſound of a retreating footfall. It came from the

the tangled mountain growth that encloſed our open ſpace around the camp-fire.

Poe, with a wild expreſſion on his face, lighted by the glare of torch and fire, ſtood erect in our midſt. With a mocking laugh that chilled every heart, he made this cry:—"Be ſtill, my brave comrades; it is only the retreating foot-fall of my laſt Demon. He is gone! Come, ſcatter the dying embers. Bid farewell to our ſafe retreat. Now let us go, and in peace, down the mountain ſide, and again return to the Univerſity."

It is indeed a myſtery how, on that night, we reached our deſerted rooms; for it was the darkeſt night that I have ever known. And our ſouls too were filled with darkneſs—a troop of grim terrors. Preſent in every mind the picture of that *nameleſs grave*. It was a picture with a ghouliſh background of human Shadows and Death-Dancing Demons.

Now this which I have told is the bare outline—an incomplete ſynopſis—of that ſtrange tale. It would take the touch of a maſter hand to render full juſtice to a ſtory told by that maſter ſpirit, Edgar Allan Poe. The

The days which followed thereafter almoſt drifted us into the belief that we had ſomewhere and ſomehow dreamed away the period of our hiding in the Ragged Mountains—a delicious ſlumber ruffled by the ſhadowy preſence of a whiſpering phantom and a *nameleſs grave*—yet to be—far up in the wooded heart of that ſpur of the Blue Ridge.

The following December ended my term and my ſtay at the Virginia Univerſity. Poe left at the ſame time. Our lines of life ſtretched out in directions widely different, and they never croſſed again. Our old friendſhip was never renewed. But our parting that December night was exceeding ſad, full of tenderneſs, and—pardon the weakneſs, for we were hardly more than boys—tears, hot, impulſive tears of deep regret. "I will never ſee you again," he ſaid. His words were indeed prophetic. And perhaps it was better ſo, yet—— But no; I will leave untold that which would only gratify an idle curioſity and open to public gaze an unſuſpected heart-wound.

There

THERE is a ſequel to that ſtory of the *nameleſs grave*, as it was told to us by the boy Poe on that ſpring-time night in **The Valley of Unrest.**

About five years ago, after a long period of wandering in many ſtrange and out-of-the-way places, I found myſelf in an old Italian town. There was a charm about the place. It was ancient, crude, and intereſting. To gratify an idle fancy—a mere whim—I had taken for the winter an old Ducal Palace, long ago given over to the chance tenant and—ruin.

There came a holiday; then a night of the Carnival. I ſtood on the carved ſtone balcony of my own Ducal Palace and watched the motley throng paſſing down the crowded ſtreet. They pelted me where I ſtood, and laughed to ſee a face ſo full of ſober thought in ſo gay a time.

Something—perhaps the odor of ſome flower, or, as it was to-night, the ſound of ſome voice, rich, ſuggeſtive—ſomething brought the deſire to come back again to this, my native land. It had been for me the ſcene of much unhappineſs,

neſs, but a new generation of haſte-lovers had riſen, and I thought to go again to the home of my fathers. Vacant all the reſt of that winter was my Ducal Palace. And the people ſaid that I was driven out by the ill-reſting ſpirit of ſome Duke foully murdered in the long ago. So I left that uneaſy Shade in full poſſeſſion of that Ducal Palace, rich in tarniſhed gildings and faded colorings.

On my return, familiar places claimed my attention. Many of thoſe whom I had known and loved were dead, and many changes marked the town of my birth. I turned from them all. I was diſappointed. Only one place had not changed. Only one of thoſe old places ſatiſfied me. It was the Univerſity of Virginia. There every thing ſeemed the ſame. True, a new ſet of Profeſſors filled the chairs of thoſe whom I had known, and men with unfamiliar faces frequented Rotunda, Porch, Arcade, and Lawn. Yet the place itſelf—its walls and its groves conſecrated to knowledge—was juſt as I had left it.

One thought abſorbed my attention. It was a

fooliſh

fooliſh notion that would not down, and was yet ill-defined. Perhaps, by a mere accident, ſome one might have been buried in **The Valley of Unrest** and in a *nameleſs grave.* So it was, filled with this almoſt belief, that I determined to go and ſee for myſelf.

But to find that lonely dell far up in the wooded heart of the Ragged Mountains was not an eaſy taſk.

While a ſtudent I had often rambled over the Univerſity Range of Mountains. I had often gathered flowers and ferns from the ſcattered ruins of the old Obſervatory.(*b*) I had often ſtood on the ſummit of Lewis Mountain and looked down upon the Pantheon-modeled Dome of the old Rotunda. I had often watched the afternoon ſunlight ſlowly creeping beneath the Arcades of Range and Lawn. And I had often looked down upon the town of Charlotteſville, with glittering ſpire and gleaming roof, ſoftened into a ſuggeſtion of ſomething pictureſque by diſtance and ſunſhine. But I had never but that once—thoſe three

(*b*) Now a new and beautiful Observatory stands on the old site.

three days of hiding—explored the Ragged Mountains. From the time that I firſt ſaw them, looking then as they always did, the embodiment of denſe and ſomber lonelineſs, they had for me a charm. This charm was enhanced by our ſelf-impoſed baniſhment and the tale told by Edgar Allan Poe on that ſpring-time night beneath the ſhadows of thoſe low-ſweeping pines and in the glare of torch and camp-fire.

That memory, after all of thoſe years, had brought me again within the reach of **The Valley of Unrest.**

It was in the ſpring-time. And it was early one bright morning when I ſtarted up the mountain-ſide to find again that beautiful dell. But in vain I wandered up and down the length and the breadth of the Ragged Mountains. The old path was overgrown and forgotten. I was wearied with much and fruitleſs ſearching. I ſtretched out beneath a huge pine, on a bed of dry moſs, and cloſed my eyes, but not in ſlumber. A bunch of new-blown lilies growing on a *nameleſs grave* was my one

and

and troubled thought. It was about the hour of noon. Suddenly I grew conſcious that ſome one was near, looking down into my face, ſtudying its features. It was that peculiar and unmiſtakable feeling of a *nearneſs* to a human being. Out of mere perverſeneſs I remained ſtill and as if aſleep. My ear, on the alert for the ſlighteſt ſound, caught the better part of theſe ſentences: "Yes, yes, I am ſure he is one of their number. True, he is greatly changed; but in ſpite of his long white hair and his heavily bearded face, I know him."

Breaking away from the capricious control of that perverſe ſpirit, I aroſe, and ſtood before a man as old, if not older than myſelf. He was a tall, angular, raw-boned mountaineer. His manner was calm, collected. His eye was bright and full of the fires of life, not yet burned out by the hoary encroachments of many years.

"Stranger," ſaid he, in a voice ſomewhat low, and full of earneſtneſs, "I have ſeen you before. But you have never ſeen me. You were about theſe parts now nigh on to fifty years ago.

ago. You were with a crowd of ſtudents from the Univerſity who came hither to hide from the county ſheriff. Now come, ſtranger, and behold the fulfillment of a ſtrange prediction that you and I and all the reſt of us heard on the third and laſt night of your ſtay in the Ragged Mountains."

I had no anſwer. I was full of ill-concealed wonder. In ſilence I followed the man who had juſt ſpoken. We penetrated deep into the denſe gloom of the foreſt. We neared an open ſpot. It was a lonely dell, and I was ſure that once again, after all the years, I ſtood within the ſhadows of that Valley of Unreſt.

Inſtantly came to mind thoſe words placed in the mouth of Bedloe, in Edgar Allan Poe's "Tale of the Ragged Mountains": "The ſcenery which preſented itſelf on all ſides had about it an indeſcribable and to me a delicious aſpect of dreary deſolation. The ſolitude ſeemed abſolutely virgin. I could not help believing that the green ſods and the gray rocks upon which I trod had been trodden never before by the foot of human being."

"Do

"Do you remember," ſaid the old man, "the tale that was told to us on that laſt ſpring-time night? See," and in the ſame tone, low and earneſt, he repeated thoſe familiar lines—

"Over the lilies there that wave
And weep above a *nameleſs grave.*"

Slowly I turned, as he pointed, toward the center of the dell, and there my eyes faſtened upon a green mound of earth, grave-ſhaped, without a ſtone, only a bunch of lilies at the head, juſt coming into bloom. In truth, I had found it, and there it was before me, the *nameleſs grave.*

THERE, ſeated beneath the ſame low-ſweeping pines that had ſheltered our party nearly fifty years before, and within ſight of that grave-mound crowned with its early ſpring lilies, I liſtened to the plain and ſtraightforward ſtory of that ancient mountaineer, Gaſper Conrad:

"Five miles from this place, juſt on the other ſide of the mountain-top, I was born. During

ing

ing the early years of my life I was a wood-cutter, full of ignorance and ſtupid happineſs. Three times a week I hauled a load of wood into Charlotteſville. And that was all. It was my life. One morning about this time of the year I was chopping wood, juſt over yonder to the left of this ſpot. I heard a voice, loud, and then low. I reſted on my ax and liſtened. In thoſe days it was a rare thing to ſee or hear any body but our neighbors, rough, ignorant mountain people like myſelf. I came over this way and looked in through the wild under-growth of the mountain. I ſaw a young man about eighteen or twenty years old walking rapidly up and down the open ſpace. He walked in a hurried, jerky manner, repeating words clearly and diſtinctly, but words that I could not then underſtand. I was rooted to the ſpot. My morning work was entirely forgotten. My heart while I liſtened ſeemed to beat with a new life, and I ſeemed to hear a promiſe of better things. Suddenly he wheeled about and quickly diſappeared. After that he often came, and always alone; frequently ſeveral

eral times a week. I always managed to be near by. There was in the mere ſound of his voice a new charm to me. It was a charm that I could not reſiſt. One day, bold with a deſire to hear every word, I ventured too near. He ſaw me. My eagerneſs and my delight gained for me a ready forgiveneſs, and it gained for me ſomething beſides—his deep and generous intereſt. For to him I owe all of the little knowledge that I now poſſeſs. From that time on, which was early in the ſpring, until late in the following December, he came almoſt daily to this lonely valley up here in the mountains. Each time he would bring a bundle of books for me to read. Each time he would patiently explain away that which I did not underſtand and gladly remove every difficulty. This opened up to me a new life full of hitherto unknown riches. My chief delight was to liſten while he read poetry and ſtories which he had juſt written, often the very night before. I never knew his name. Once I aſked him. He ſaid for his anſwer that he was a Univerſity ſtudent, and more than that it was neither well

well nor neceſſary for me to know. Each time he came alone, except when he brought your crowd of young fellows, to find a ſafe hiding place from the ſearch of the county ſheriff. That was about the time when I firſt knew him. I remember each detail of your ſtay in the mountain. Throughout the day you played your cards and drank your *peach and honey*. But with the coming of night you gathered around your bright fire, lit your torches, and, half laughing, half in earneſt, told ſuch queer things about Witches, Wizards, and Goblins. So paſſed away your time. It was on the laſt night that my friend told his ſtory—and it was the laſt one told—of that *nameleſs grave*. Do you remember how you were ſtartled to your feet, in the after-ſtillneſs, when the ſtory was ended? Do you remember the ſound of retreating footſteps on the outer edge of your company? They were mine. I had been concealed in the tangled undergrowth. I had heard the ſtory. He alone, as he told his now prophetic tale, diſcovered me in my place of hiding. You know how well he uſed my haſty

retreat

retreat to make you *feel*, even if you did not *believe*, that it was the departure of his laſt Demon. He came here for the laſt time on a raw December day. He bade me a tender, reluctant farewell. 'On the morrow,' he ſaid, 'I leave forever this haunt of my youth. I will have no deſire again to return. Solemnly, faithfully promiſe that you will not leave the mountains, and go down into that Valley of Human Wretchedneſs, that world about which you have read ſo much. Heaven knows it muſt be far better to read about it—aye, to even think and dream about it—than it is to know it, and, alas! to *love it*, as I do. Stay here always. Do what good you may among your neighbors. Forget all that which I have taught you. Be ignorant; be happy. But remember, dear Gaſper, ſome day,' he ſaid, pointing to what was then only a clump of new lilies in the early bloom, 'the clouds above will rapidly drift, unmoved by any wind,

"Over the lilies there that wave
And weep above a *nameleſs grave*."'

"Ah,

"Ah, ſtranger, well may you look with wonder on that lily-crowned grave. Two people have known the manner of its making—my good wife and myſelf. But ſhe is dead. I alone can give report of that grave-maker—the maker of his own grave, who lies at laſt in peace, I truſt, beneath the evergreen ſod of that *nameleſs grave*.

"In the autumn of 1835, near the cloſe of day, and in the midſt of a frightful ſtorm, there came about theſe parts a ſtranger. He was ſome fifty-five or ſix years of age. He ſought ſhelter beneath my roof. He expreſſed to me while there the intention of building a ſmall hut in which he intended to paſs the winter. I liked the man. I liked his manner and his talk. So I tried to prevail upon him to live with us—ſhare our poor quarters—becauſe I knew they were far better than any he could provide for himſelf. He was kindly diſpoſed toward me from the ſtart. But he refuſed abſolutely to have any thing to do with my neighbors. He would not accept from them a ſingle offer of aſſiſtance, and would not even

even anſwer their queſtions. He was firſt regarded by the mountain people as a rough, ſurly fellow, and finally he was held in abſolute dread—this partly on account of his manner toward them, and partly on account of his ſtrange, uncouth appearance. He wore a great heavy beard, and his long, coarſe, gray hair was always in a maſs of ugly tangles. He was known by the ſomewhat appropriate name of Old Shaggy. The bare mention of his name was all-ſufficient to quiet the noiſy child or make the older and unruly ones creep off to their beds of ſtraw in the low-ſwinging loft. Old women by the fireſide told many a ſtory of midnight murder and broad, open daylight crime. Old Shaggy was ſaid to be, in each inſtance, the murderer or the criminal. If a child died ſuddenly, it was ſupposed that the curſe of Old Shaggy reſted on its little head. Even the death of our beaſts of burden, our oxen and our few horſes, was laid at the door of Old Shaggy. He was the terror of all this country ſide for twenty miles around. My continued intimacy with the man coſt me the love

and

and the good will of many of theſe honeſt people. They believed that he was an Evil Spirit in fleſh and blood, ſent to torture the few inhabitants of the Ragged Mountains for ſome wrong-doing, the nature of which they did not know. When I paſſed among them they would draw aſide, and, whiſpering, point after me: 'Gaſper Conrad, poor fellow; Old Shaggy has ſorely bewitched him, and his wife too. We 'uns will have nothin' mo' to do wid 'em.' They faithfully kept their word for many years, even after Old Shaggy had myſteriouſly diſappeared from among them. To this day there is not one, even thoſe of a new generation, no matter how brave, who will draw near this fatal place. For yonder, on the edge of this clearing, uſed to ſtand the little hut of Old Shaggy.

"He was a man of much information. He had rubbed up againſt the world and gotten from it much that was good and more that was bad. Yet it was all of the moſt intenſe intereſt, both the good and the bad. He had been every where, in every known part of the world. He once told me that he had been a ſteady traveler

traveler for about twenty years; that he did not remain long in any one place; and that now, weary of the life, he had returned here in order that he might die not far away from the place of his birth. For he ſaid that he was born ſomewhere in Albemarle County, near the little town of Milton; that he was of a good family, always wayward, latterly profligate. His people thought him dead years before, killed in a drunken brawl; ſo they were told. He did not care for them to think otherwiſe, for he was indeed worſe than dead to them.

"He parted from me one night with theſe words: 'And furthermore, dear Gaſper, I know to the day, and even to the hour, the time appointed for my death. Years ago I determined that my grave ſhould be in ſome unfrequented dell in the Ragged Mountains. For I love their lonely hollows and their wooded peaks. Hereabouts I have ſo often wandered in the days of my boyhood with dog and gun. Some day I will ſleep in peace beneath its perpetual ſhadows, and in a grave that ſhall be forever *nameleſs*.'

"Thoſe

"Thoſe words filled my ſoul with terror. Back with a new force and a new meaning came the lines—

'Over the lilies there that wave
And weep above a *nameleſs grave*.'

But I was ſilent. My emotion did not betray me. After that he more frequently ſpoke of himſelf and of his eventful life. Yet he never told me any thing of his actual hiſtory. That he was filled with a remorſe of ſome kind for ſome crime or wrong-doing, I am ſure. It ſeemed to be a remorſe unſatiffied, relentleſs.

"A ſhort while before his death he told me that he had been with Aaron Burr during his famous expedition, and that Burr was a brilliant man, faſcinating, powerful, and that he had been the indirect cauſe of the one great evil in his miſerable life. Somehow, ſtranger, I have always thought that evil was a foul but unintentional murder. I have gathered the idea more from the manner of Old Shaggy than from his guarded words.

"It was after dark, on the night of September 14, 1836. There was a loud knock at my door.

door. Old Shaggy ſtood outſide in the darkneſs; he refuſed to come in. 'No, no,' he ſaid; 'there is not a moment to loſe; every thing is ready; come, and come quickly!' I made a freſh torch, and followed after his rapid ſtrides into the lonely valley. I felt that I was with a madman. I made no queſtion. I was alone with Old Shaggy and with the Silence and the Shadows. By the light of the torch I diſcovered that he had torn down his hut, and cut the rough boards into ſhort pieces, and placed them in a regular pile on the edge of an open grave. 'Made with my own hands,' he ſaid. It was ten or twelve feet deep, and there was in the broad bottom a rough-made coffin; an ill-ſhaped lid near by on the outſide. Without any emotion in either his manner or his voice, he turned to me and ſaid: 'It is about over now, this ugly dream called life. I am grateful to you for all your kindneſs. Do not let it fail me now, when I need it the moſt and for the laſt time.' Speechleſs, powerleſs, I ſtood by his ſide. He turned away and ſlipped down into the grave. He deliberately placed himſelf

in

in the coffin which he had made. He cloſed his eyes. He folded his ſtrong arms acroſs his great breaſt. One moment thus. Then he ſprang up into a ſitting poſture, and in a loud voice, full of pitiful entreaty, exclaimed: 'Do n't! do n't! I am *Albert Pike Carr!*' He fell back into the coffin exhauſted, as I thought, after this ſtrange and unuſual excitement. But it was the exhauſtion that only death itſelf can bring.

"I made new torches, and worked until the early dawn and afterward. The ſunlight found the valley juſt as it uſed to be before the coming of Old Shaggy. For I had buried every thing with him, even the rough boards of his hut. Nothing remained.

"But here in the center was the grave. And it was then, and even now is, as our friend predicted, and as Old Shaggy wiſhed it to be—*nameleſs*.

"Stranger, you have heard the ſtory of that mound with its pretty lilies. I have told you all that I know about the man who lies beneath. I do not think his name was *Albert Pike*

Pike Carr. That muſt have been the name of the man he murdered. And Old Shaggy died with the ſame words on his own lips that formed the death-cry of his victim—'Do n't! do n't! I am *Albert Pike Carr!*'"

The old man's ſtory was ended. He was weary and out of breath. Yet he was full of nervous excitement. "Look!" and he ſeized my hand; "there is not a breath of wind, yet the trees are trembling as if in a ſtorm, and the clouds overhead ruſh madly through the heavens

'Over the lilies there that wave
And weep above a *nameleſs grave.*'"

I left the old man ſtanding by that lonely grave in that lonely dell. I reluctantly paſſed down the mountain-ſide. The evening wind, new riſen, from out of thoſe low-ſweeping and mournful pines, made echo—laughing, mocking echo—"*nameleſs grave, nameleſs grave.*"

THEREAFTER, a ſhort time, and while ſtill at the Univerſity, a bundle of old family letters was placed at my diſpoſal. They were written by a Virginia woman. She was the rareſt wit of her day. I had known and liked her while a ſtudent. So each letter was to me full of intereſt; each page brought back a memory. Several ſentences in a letter to her brother, a prominent Richmond lawyer, inſtantly attracted my attention. This was the excerpt:

"By the way, have you heard the lateſt news? I am told that one of the *Carrs*—Albert, I think; at all events, the one inclined to be wild, and who is a lover of the ventureſome—has run away from home, and in company with a *diſſolute companion* gone to join that dreadful expedition of Col. Aaron Burr. The name of his comrade is unknown."

That was all—a mere dainty bit of a fair maiden's goſſip. But it is enough to furniſh the miſſing point in that ſtory of the *nameleſs grave*. Now, given a number of facts, and a certain concluſion is inevitable. With the facts already brought

brought forth, this is *my* theory—*my* concluſion:

Young Carr and his *diſſolute companion* together go forth to join the expedition of the brilliant Burr. One of their number weakens in his devotion. Something muſt be done. Burr ſends for this *diſſolute companion*. "He will be on duty near the marſh to-night; do it quickly! do it well!" ſaid Col. Burr. But the ſides of a tent, like the walls of a houſe, have ears. Somebody crouching near, loſt in the darkness.

"I am ſick to-night; take my place on duty near the marſh; won't you, pleaſe?" ſaid a ſoldier to young Carr. And "I will" was the brief and generous anſwer.

Later on, a man hurries acroſs the corner of the marſh and goes far beyond the camp. He is a deſerter, and he has made good his eſcape. Brave young Carr ſtands watchful duty in his place *near the marſh*. A footſtep. "Who goes there?" cries out the valiant Carr. A ſharp ſword-thruſt from behind. He turns, recognizes the man he loves, and, conſcious that it is the

is the reſult of ſome cruel miſtake, quickly exclaims: "Do n't! do n't! I am *Albert Pike Carr!*"

But the recognition and words are too late. The moon had riſen, but her tardy light was a mockery.

Years of remorſe and conſtant wandering. The *diſſolute companion* returns once again to his native place. By a curious coincidence he falls upon a dell, almoſt inacceſſible, far up into the heart of the Ragged Mountains—**The Valley of Unrest.** He reaches the ſpot in the midſt of a frightful ſtorm, and he does not again leave the place. But with the ſkill and cunning of a madman he brings his life to a cloſe by poiſon, or like means, on that 14th day of September, 1836—the deathday of Aaron Burr—another curious coincidence or ſtrange fatality. Which?

It is not more than paſſing ſtrange that a man run mad by the thought of a crime committed, double in its nature, ſhould determine to end his life in ſome one particular ſpot and in ſome one particular way. Any clever madman might have brought about a death and a burial

burial juſt as unique in its character. This ſignifies nothing. Yet it does ſeem ſtrange indeed to find him in that one particular ſpot above all others—**The Valley of Unrest.** And ſtranger ſtill, that he ſhould have ſo ſtrongly deſired what is actually the caſe, and that which had been predicted by Edgar Allan Poe — a *nameleſs grave.* That he ſhould chance to die on the ſame day, perhaps the very ſame hour, with Aaron Burr, who was the cauſe of his lifelong remorſe — the cold-blooded inſtigator of his crime—is, in truth, a remarkable element in this tangle of human deſtinies. Unnatural and moſt improbable ſounds the entire ſtory. If true, it is—of courſe by accident—the perfect fulfillment of a moſt peculiar prediction. If not true—only the garrulous mutterings of old age—then it is a curious, cloſe-woven line of unaccountable things. But it is the plain and ſimple truth, this ſtory as told by Gaſper Conrad, the honeſt mountaineer.

Now this much I know to be a fact and beyond all doubt: There is in the Ragged Mountains of Virginia a certain lonely dell

which

which does contain the grave of ſome man whoſe name is unknown. The mountaineers thereabout know by tradition the preſence of that grave; conſequently no power on earth can induce any one of them to enter that dell. And they know—alſo by tradition—the ſtory of Old Shaggy, but not of his death and the ſtrange manner thereof.

I alſo know it to be a fact, becauſe told to me by Poe himſelf, that he conſtantly frequented that dell in the Ragged Mountains. I know that it was there that he guided us into a ſafe retreat from the purſuit of the county ſheriff, and it was there I heard the ſtory of the *nameleſs grave*, and it was there I heard him ſlowly, diſtinctly repeat thoſe lines,

> "Over the lilies there that wave
> And weep above a *nameleſs grave*"—

not once only, but twice; at the opening and at the cloſe of his myſterious prophetic tale. This—both the ſtory and the lines—muſt have been heard by Gaſper Conrad. How elſe could he have caught the oft-repeated refrain?

That Edgar Allan Poe muſt ſurely have meant this

this lonely dell when he wrote **The Valley of Unrest,** needs no proof. Read the Poem. It makes moſt excellent anſwer to any denial, no matter how idle or how earneſt it may chance to be.

AFTER reading thoſe words in the old letter of that dead Beauty-Wit, I determined to go back into **The Valley of Unrest,** find Gaſper Conrad, and queſtion him more cloſely. Now, one Biſhop keeps a little grocery and notion-ſtore near the Univerſity Poſt-office, and there I had occaſion to ſtop on my way out to the mountains, and overheard this converſation, which made my intention uſeleſs:

"So you ſay old Gaſper Conrad is dead, do you?" I heard ſome one exclaim, and then add, "When did he die?"

"Night 'fore laſt," anſwered a gruff, rough-looking fellow. He was evidently one of the Ragged Mountain people. There was a long, ruſty piece of limp crape hanging on his left arm. It bore the ſigns of frequent uſe.

A man idling near the door, leaning againſt an

an empty box, whittling a ſtick, ſaid in a lazy, drawling tone, "Is that the ſame old fellow was all the time acting curiouſ-like, and talking about graves and lilies, or ſome kind of flowers growing ſomewhere up there on the mountains?"

"The very ſame 'un," ſhortly anſwered the mountaineer, and then he ſtrode out of the ſtore and out of ſight, with his heavy, ſtupid face turned toward his humble home.

"He was the old man's nevy, he was," ſaid a melancholy byſtander.

Dr. McKennie, who keeps the Univerſity Book-ſtore,(c) eſtabliſhed during my time by his excellent father, told me that he had for many years known and reſpected this rather remarkable mountaineer, Gaſper Conrad. To uſe the words of the good Doctor: "He was honeſt, quiet, ſenſible; but to me a continual ſurpriſe. He had cultivated not only a taſte, but an actual thirſt for reading, and of a certain kind—always books of travel and adventure.

(c) The University Bookstore is now in other hands. But Dr. McK. is still living. His address—University of Virginia, Albemarle Co., Va.

Filled

FILLED with a deſire to give a glimpſe of Edgar Allan Poe, his inner life, while a ſtudent at the Virginia Univerſity, I have unreſervedly written that which has gone before. I do not know into whoſe hands it may fall. I do not know if the great world will ever hear the burden of my ſong. Yet it was on my heart to write, and I have written. I have added ſomething—if only a little ſomething—to the much which has been ſaid and written about this my Myſterious Human Fantaſy. That much I may have done, and ſomething elſe. I have ſhown the curious juxtapoſition of circumſtances bringing about the complete fulfillment of a prediction made in a moment of midnight revel in the heart of the Ragged Mountains and by Edgar Allan Poe. It has about it at leaſt the coloring, the ſtrong coloring of a perfected prophecy.

Now the taſk of the night is finiſhed, and the night has gone. Again, far down the turn of the road I hear the muſical ring of jingling ſleigh-bells, which hours ago rang up the memory of that Myſterious Human Fantaſy, like

unto

unto the Witch of Endor bringing back a dead Samuel to a living and troubled Saul. Again, I hear the gladſome ſound of merry voices—that ſame gay party which I heard ſo early in the night, returning now, at the break of another winter day, from the country dance.

They are gone.

Again, I lean out of the ſquare hole under the deep, ſlanting eaves.

The cold gray lights creep into my den of Old Oddities.

They chill my heart.

The ſnow-ſtorm is over.

The ſun will ſhine to-day.

But will it bring brightneſs and warmth into my life?

Again, and from out of the cold, miſty depths of the early dawn riſes before me that Myſterious Human Fantaſy.

It floats away with the dark humors of the night.

It teaches the firſt riſing wind of this new-born day to whiſper,

"Over the lilies there that wave
And weep above a *nameleſs grave.*"

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